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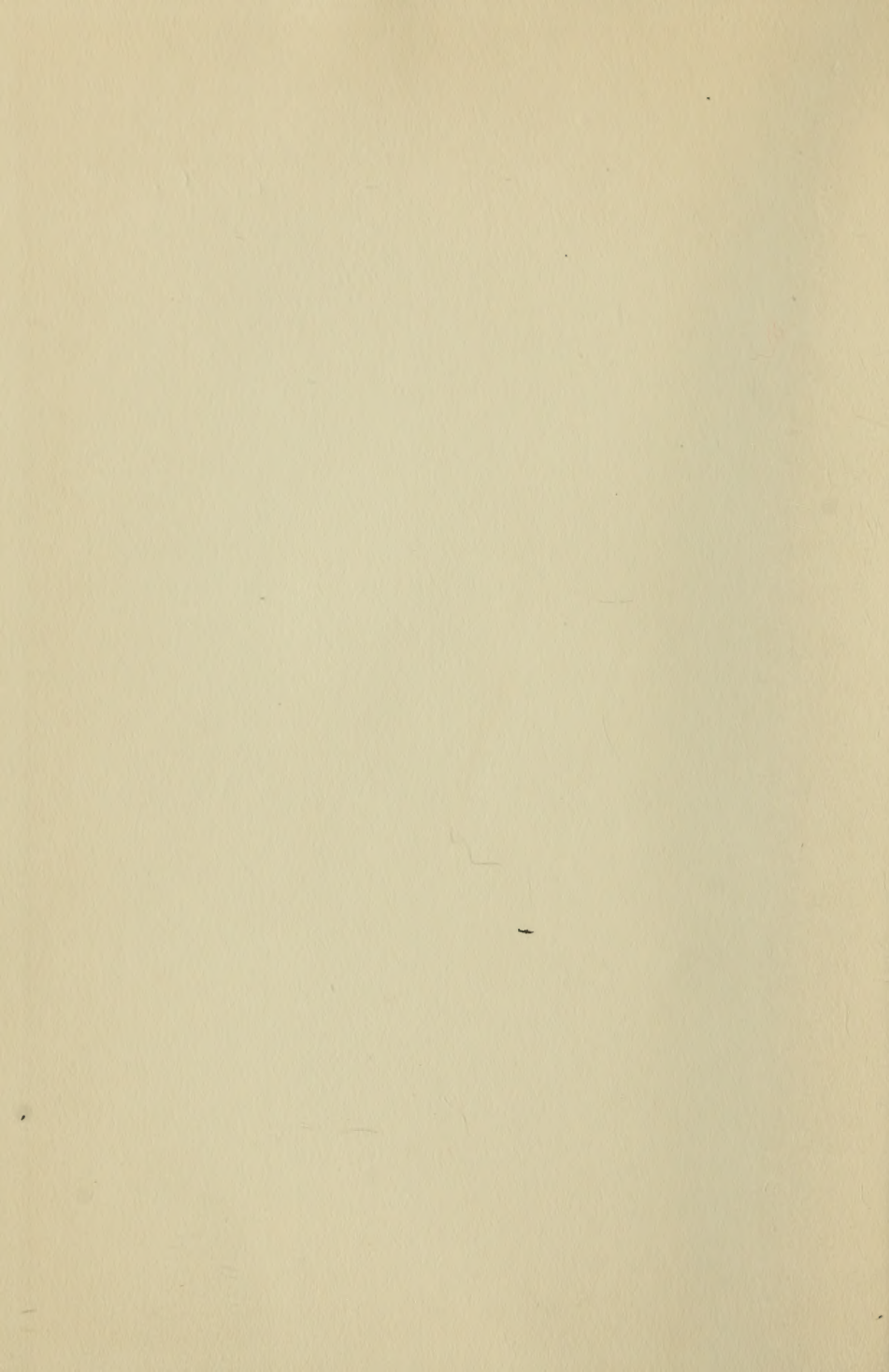
*Sails
and
Mirage*


AND OTHER POEMS

By GEORGE STERLING

25-

1st ed.





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BY GEORGE STERLING

The Caged Eagle and Other Poems

The Testimony of the Suns and Other Poems

A Wine of Wizardry and Other Poems

The House of Orchids and Other Poems

Beyond the Breakers and Other Poems

Yosemite

Ode on the Opening of the Panama-Pacific
International Exposition

The Evanescent City

The Binding of the Beast and Other Poems

Lilith—A Play

Rosamund—A Play

A. M. ROBERTSON

San Francisco

SAILS AND MIRAGE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
GEORGE STERLING

Author of

"THE TESTIMONY OF THE SUNS"

"A WINE OF WIZARDRY"

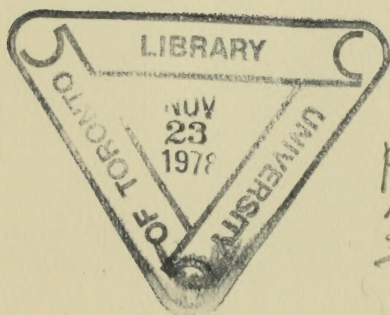
"THE HOUSE OF ORCHIDS"

ETC.

SAN FRANCISCO
A. M. ROBERTSON

MDCCCCXI

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

TO MY DEAR FRIEND
ALBERT M. BENDER
OF SAN FRANCISCO

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SAILS AND MIRAGE
AND OTHER POEMS

SAILS AND MIRAGE

THE QUEEN FORGETS

What came before and afterward
 (She said) I do not know;
But I remember well a night
 In a life long ago.

What spoil was I of Egypt sacked?
 Of what old war the pledge?
Around my tent whose army lay,
 At the great desert's edge?

A maiden, or a Satrap's wife,
 A slave or queen was I
Who saw that night the steady stars
 Go down the living sky?

And saw against the heavenly ranks
 How one stood watch and ward.
Black on the stars he stood, and leaned
 On a cross-hilted sword.

THE QUEEN FORGETS

There was no sound in all the camp
But when a stallion neighed
I saw the light of Sirius
On the cold blade.

Downward, above a single palm,
Slowly the great star crept;
More motionless my sentry stood,
As silently I wept.

What wrath had Libya for my loss?
In Syria what tears?
What king or swineherd cursed his god
In those forgotten years?

The tale is not in tapestry;
The grey monks do not know
Only its shadow touches me
From out the long ago.

Of terror and of tenderness
Is that far vigil made
And the green light of Sirius
On the chill blade.

SAUL

“And they put his armor in the house of
Ashtoreth.”—*I Samuel, xxxi, 10.*

Weep for the one so strong to slay, whom One has taken at
last!

Mourn for the mail that rings no more and the ruin
unforecast!

This was he of the flaming heart and the deep, heroic breath,
Whose sword is laid and his armor hung in the House of
Ashtoreth.

Weep for the one so swift to slay, whose knees have bent to
the night!

Dust is thick on his thresholds now, tho trumpets call to
the fight.

Slinger and bowman gather fast, but our strong man does
not come.

Captains long for his counsels now, but the sated lips are
dumb.

Cry his name in the citadel, sending the runners forth:

The South gives back no rumor of him; in vain they question
the North.

Seek him not where the wall is held or the spears go in to
death,

Whose shield is laid and his armor hung in the House of
Ashtoreth.

This was he grown mighty in war, but her war is otherwise:
Swords that flash from her bosom bared, arrows cast from
her eyes.

SAUL

Who shall stoop from her javelin thrown, who from her
singing dart?

Her sudden shaft is hot in his loins, her steel in his
maddened heart.

Deep in the still and altared dusk her lamp glows small
and red,

Mirrored clear in the great cuirass, like the rubies of her bed;
Blood of light on his burnished helm, on the belt and the
greaves, one saith

Whose spear is laid and his armor hung in the House of
Ashtoreth.

Tho Gath go up to the threshing-floors, or hosts assemble
at Tyre,

Wait no more for your prince's word, who has taken his
desire.

Cities and fields and given hearts, honor and life were
weighed,

The balance shown and the end foreseen and the deep
decision made.

Weep for the one so strong in war, whose war is now of
the Dark!

Well he harnessed his breast with steel, but her arrows find
their mark.

Her hands have loosened the brazen belt and her breath has
found his breath

Whose sword is laid and his armor hung in the House of
Ashtoreth.

OCEAN SUNSETS

I

Men watch the wide magnificence uprolled,
A deathless surf of glory down the zones—
Ancient as that with which the sea intones
Its undelivered sorrow. Fold on fold
The foam of splendor deepens, far and cold,
Below the stars' imaginary thrones,
Till on the twilight of those sapphire stones
Are ashes of the sun-deserted gold.

Along the mighty rondure of the world
Forever and forever sweeps that wave,
From Arctic mountains to the southern^rfloe,
In soundlessness on purple islands hurled,
With opalescent wash of hues that lave
Old summits, sacred in that afterglow.

OCEAN SUNSETS

II

How often, from the bleak sierra's crest,
The northern headland, the deserted shore,
Have eyes beheld that crimson billow soar,
To sink on Edens deeper in the West!
How often, on some fatal ocean-quest,
That light has gleamed upon the lifted oar—
Cast from that Golden House whose closing door
Is still the evading goal of our unrest.

Oh! far in time and far on alien seas
Its path has been the heroes' path of light,
Down which the galley, goddess-lured, was drawn.
Wildly that radiance was cast on these,
Till the red prow drove westward in the night,
Followed by slow Arcturus and the dawn.

OCEAN SUNSETS

III

Roll on, tremendous surf, till the last eyes
For the last time behold thy glory flame!
Then, in the sea of darkness whence they came
Resolve thy splendor and reverting dyes!
Thy forfeit hues shall fade on somber skies,
When, in a breath, man's grandeur and his shame
Pass to the silences that have no name,
Where dreams are never and the night denies.

Thy marvel is of man and not of thee,
And he being not, no longer thou shalt be.
Parent and worshipper of loveliness,
He walks a realm forbidden to the brute—
An alchemist whose spirit can transmute
Color and form to beauty's pure excess.

THE IRIS HILLS
FROM "ROSAMUND"

Up to the hills of iris we two went yearning.
O youth and youth's heart burning!
O winds of Spring!

Far on the hills of iris two lay forgetful.
O rapture unregretful!
O fire of Spring!

Down from the hills of iris we wandered slowly.
O lilies crushed and lowly!
O tears of Spring!

DIRGE
FROM "LILITH"

O lay her gently where the lark is nesting
And wingéd things are glad!
Tears end, and now begins the time of resting
For her whose heart was sad.

Give roses, but a fairer bloom is taken.
Strew lilies — she was one,
Gone in her silence to a place forsaken
By roses and the sun.

Deep is her slumber at the last of sorrow,
Of twilight and the rain.
Her eyes have closed forever on tomorrow
And on tomorrow's pain.

SANCTUARY

Often I long, in cities wrung by care,
Awhile in ancient solitudes to sink,
And stand delaying at a rillet's brink.
The pilgrim hears but woodland murmurs there,
And water falling with a sound like prayer
In hidden pools where only thrushes drink,
The singing silver joining, link by link,
Their shadowed crystal, pure as ocean air.

Hold cool your canyons, O eternal hills!
For where the voices are not I would be,
Led to your heart by those betraying rills.
Happy, tho for a little, that release,
In twilights where old memories summon me
To drain the lonely chalice of your peace.

SPRING IN CARMEL

O'er Carmel fields in the springtime the sea-gulls follow the
plow.

White, white wings on the blue above!

White were your brow and breast, O Love!

But I cannot see you now.

Tireless ever the Mission swallow

Dips to meadow and poppied hollow;

Well for her mate that he can follow,

As the buds are on the bough.

By the woods and waters of Carmel the lark is glad in the
sun.

Harrow! harrow! music of God!

Near to your nest her feet have trod,

Whose journeyings are done.

Sing, O lover! I cannot sing.

Wild and sad are the thoughts you bring.

Well for you are the skies of spring,

And to me all skies are one.

In the beautiful woods of Carmel an iris bends to the wind.

O thou far-off and sorrowful flower!

Rose that I found in a tragic hour!

Rose that I shall not find!

Petals that fell so soft and slowly,

Fragrant snows on the grasses lowly,

Gathered now would I call you holy

Ever to eyes once blind.

SPRING IN CARMEL

In the pine-sweet valley of Carmel the cream-cups scatter
in foam.

Azures of early lupin there!

Now the wild lilac floods the air

Like a broken honey-comb.

So could the flowers of Paradise

Pour their souls to the morning skies;

So like a ghost your fragrance lies

On the path that once led home.

On the emerald hills of Carmel the spring and winter
have met.

Here I find in a gentled spot

The frost of the wild forget-me-not,

And—I cannot forget.

Heart once light as the floating feather

Borne aloft in the sunny weather,

Spring and winter have come together—

Shall you and she meet yet?

On the rocks and beaches of Carmel the surf is mighty
to-day.

Breaker and lifting billow call

To the high, blue Silence over all

With the word no heart can say.

Time-to-be, shall I hear it ever?

Time-that-is, with the hands that sever,

Cry all words but the dreadful "Never!"

And name of her far away!

THE SETTING OF ANTARES

The skies are clear, the summer night is old.

 The foamless ocean reaches to the West,
 With troubled moonlight on its tranquil breast,
Weary of grief eternally retold.

Now is that hour when winds and waters hold
 A truce of silence and inducing rest,
 And now, like ocean-eagles to their nest,
The stars go seaward, silvery and cold.

Antares, heart of blood, how stir thy wings
Above the sea's mysterious murmurings!

 The road of death leads outward to thy light,
 And thou art symbol for a time of him
 Whose fated star, companionless and dim,
Sinks to the wide horizon of the Night.

THE DESERTED NEST

A chill is on the air,
And, robbed by grey November of its leaves,
The maple tosses, and the north wind grieves
Among the branches bare.

That limb above the street
Holds yet, I see, the trustful robin's nest,
Where once her eggs were warm below her breast
When Maytide morns were sweet.

The fledglings long have flown;
The mother bird as well has gone away,
And in the little home where once they lay
Are snowflakes early sown.

Do they, the parents two,
Remember now the refuge dear and small,—
The dwelling once beloved over all,
That held the orbs of blue?

The snow, the wind, the rain
Will make a ruin of the nest ere long.
The spring will come at last with bud and song,
But they two not again.

The winter shakes my door,
And bitter winds are on the frozen earth,
And on that home of mating and of birth
That is a home no more.

KINGSHIP

On whitest snows the darkest lies the stain.

Fair are the flowers at the deadlier brinks,

And he who deepest of life's nectar drinks

Has at the last the fouler dregs to drain.

Our dearest dreams are those that come in vain.

Heavy the chain when golden are the links.

Sadness is made the crown of him who thinks.

Each new ideal brings the heart new pain.

Nobility and sorrow somehow find

A kinship. In the exalted courts of mind

Our laugh is jester and our grief is king.

Tho happiness be found the fairest goal,

Man in his pleasure seems a trivial thing,

And tears the coronation of the soul.

THE FIRST FOOD

Mother, in some sad evening long ago,
From your young breast my groping lips were taken,
Their hunger stilled, so soon again to waken,
But nevermore that holy food to know.

Ah! nevermore! for all the child might crave!
Ah! nevermore! through years unkind and dreary!
Often of other fare my lips are weary,
Unwearied once of what your bosom gave.

(Poor wordless mouth that could not speak your name!
At what unhappy revels has it eaten
The viands that no memory can sweeten,—
The banquet found eternally the same!)

Then fell a shadow first on you and me,
And tendrils broke that held us two how dearly!
Once infinitely yours, then hourly, yearly,
Less yours, as less the worthy yours to be.

(O mouth that yet should kiss the mouth of Sin!
Were lies so sweet, now bitter to remember?
Slow sinks the flame unfaithful to an ember;
New beauty fades and passion's wine is thin.)

How poor an end of that solicitude
And all the love I had not from another!
Peace to your dear forgiving heart, O Mother,
Who gave the dear and unremembered food!

THE WIND

Unseen and ancient haunter of the skies!
Eternal pilgrim, born to yearn and roam,
Seeking, as man, a refuge and a home
And that surpassing peace that life denies!
Lone visitant and wanderer from afar,
Of whose strange news we have no certain word,
Though men from time unsearchable have heard
Thy chant on frozen mountains to the star!

Herder of waves on seas without a sail,
And trampler of the foam of billows hurled
Upon the shifting shorelines of the world!
Below thy wings the driven deeps are pale.
Wine of the world, for which its oceans live,
And clouds go forth, and many lands have rain,
That else had lifted to the heavens in vain
The hope and prayer that urge the heavens to give!

On what glad wings thou goest to each task
The sun, thy mighty over-lord, assigns! —
Lifting all night thy song from northern pines,
Or threatening a beach where monsters bask.
Then, at thine own mad will, thy pinions rise,
To find the colored castles of the morn,
Or, in those altitudes where thou wast born,
To raze the pomps of sunset from the skies.

THE WIND

Sole voice in nameless cities of the Past,
Long ruinous, whose dust of monarchs dead,
Moulded by thee to phantom forms, is led
Once more down mighty avenues, then cast
Back to the old oblivion! Thou dost sing
Their requiem in lion-haunted rooms;
The chariots and trumpets of old dooms
Thou echoest, and battles where they ring.

Roamer of nights too beautiful for sleep!
Launcher of clouds from Heaven's irradiant shore,
Whose silver and the moon have equal ore
And company together on the deep!
How many hearts have ached to follow thee,
Dreaming thou farest to the Happy Isles,—
Dreaming that far beyond the sapphire miles
Beauty assents beside her starry sea.

All life shall enter into rest ere thou,
Who wast before the oceans, and shalt wail
O'er oceans stilled forever. Thou shalt fail
When the eternal winter comes; but now,
Invisible archangel of the world,
Thy mouth is on thy trumpet, and its cry
Goes forth in challenge unto earth and sky,
Ere yet the banners of thy war are furled!

A LOST GARDEN

Under November skies,
In lovely ruin lies
A garden, long deserted by the birds.
The lacquered gold of old magnolia leaves
Gleams on its hidden lawn
Like sweet, forgotten words.
Here a lone poplar, slender-shafted, grieves,
An hour before the dawn.

Tranquil the sunlight falls
As afternoon recalls
The clime that summer's vanished feet have crossed.
A memory's lily flashes on the glance,
Like dryad-silver seen
For but a breath, then lost
Far down the western vistas of romance,
In forests old and green.

Here lies a reedless pool,
Mysterious and cool,
Within whose breast, like a remembered sin
A mirrored flower casts her scarlet moon.
Silent the bloom above,
Silent the bloom within,
As lovers fearful lest they tell too soon
Their sorrow and their love.

A LOST GARDEN

Dusk has a gentler grace
Within this quiet place,
Unhaunted yet by winds that soon shall come.
The shadows meet. The world accepts the night,
The night her youngest star.
An owl, no longer dumb,
Cries hollowly. A shape beyond the sight
Responds, and from afar.

Larger for her delay,
Slow on the path of day,
The moon gives softly of her phantom gold.
The pool, untroubled yet, receives the lure—
Fain of that fleeting gift,
Ungatherable, cold,
Ancient, and as the snows of winter pure,
Caught in the glacier's rift.

Upon the morning sky
The nameless clouds go by,
Flower of the heavens and their unchanging dream,
Fled in an hour and in an hour renewed.
On ways untrod they soar
Whose fallen shadows stream
On paths of this reproachful solitude,
Where footsteps come no more.

A LOST GARDEN

But day or night, the spot
To things imagined not
Stirs mournfully, as eddying, the leaf
Sinks earthward to the wind's autumnal moan.
Here, tho no word be said,
One finds, in twilights brief,
A presence and its whisper, still unknown
And still un comforted.

So shall it be till spring
Return, and linnets sing
On dawns too delicate for other sound,
And eves aeolian with the harps of rain,—
Till Earth again confess
Her dreaming heart has found
The beautiful Illusion and its pain,
So rich in happiness.

THE GLASS OF TIME

I know a lake high up among the hills—
A pure tranquility where shadows rest,
Accepting to its melancholy breast
The silver-throated rills.

A solitary killdee, running fleet,
(The one unquiet thing that meets the sight)
Slips like a bead along the thread of light
Where land and water meet.

Silent around the forest ramparts press,
Walling with emerald its quietude,
Ere Evening and her mystery o'erbrood
That hush and holiness.

There secretly the large-eyed stag is found,
And there at dawn the stealing mist that finds
Upon its arras the delaying winds,
Too ghostly for a sound.

Morning, with distant voices in the wood,
Shortens the shadows, hour by fragrant hour.
Voiceless awhile, the redwood sentries tow'r
Where once their fathers stood.

Lucid, serene, untroubled by a wind,
The noonday crystal slumbers, cool and deep,
Calm as the features of a nun asleep,
Whom not a dream shall find.

THE GLASS OF TIME

Elusively, a sense of things unheard
Awakes, and is forgotten as it dies.
The afternoon is great with peace. Then cries,
Far off, and once, a bird.

The slow-winged clouds pass in unhast'ing flight
To some far haven of Hesperian ease,
Paving that court of chill translucencies
With alabaster light.

Therein, as in her sky, the moon shall melt,
The stars find sanctuary for a space,
Till morning, uncompassionate, efface
The palace where they dwelt.

There if one come, he fills that placid glass
With azure glory of the mirrored sky.
Fading, the vision and the glory die
With him whose footsteps pass . . .

Lake of the spirit, even so shall cease
(A pale mirage in heavens profound and far)
The face of Beauty, passing like a star
From peace to vaster peace.

REASON

Her hands, that seem so pitiless, unbar
The gates of her incomparable halls
Where crowns of light make monarchs of her thralls,
In whom the kingdoms of the Future are.
Her eyes seem cruel, but they see afar,
And her lips bitter, but their music falls
As from the heavens the dawn, and from her walls
The watchmen first descry the morning star.

For she alone is truly merciful:
The spectres of mirage her winds annul
Have risen but for man's bewildering;
And in the dusk descending to the grave
Her dim and caverned lamp alone can save,
Or show salvation but a futile thing.

SONNETS BY THE NIGHT-SEA

V

The wind of night is like an ocean's ghost.
The deep is greatly troubled. I, alone,
See the wave shattered and the wave-crest thrown
Where pine and cypress hold their ancient post.
The sounds of war, the trampling of a host,
Over the borders of the world are blown;
The feet of armies deathless and unknown
Halt, baffled, at the ramparts of the coast.

Yea! and the Deep is troubled! In this heart
Are voices of a far and shadowy Sea,
Above whose wastes no lamp of earth shall gleam.
Farewells are spoken and the ships depart
For that horizon and its mystery,
Whose stars tell not if life, or death, is dream.

SONNETS BY THE NIGHT-SEA

VI

The wind of night is mighty on the deep—

A presence haunting sea and land again.

That wind upon the watery waste hath been;

That wind upon the desert soon shall sweep.

O vast and mournful spirit, wherefore keep

Thy vigil at the fleeting homes of men,

Who need no voice of thine to tell them when

Is come the hour to labor or to sleep?

From waste to waste thou goest, and art dumb

Before the morning. Patient in her tree

The bird awaits until thy strength hath passed,

Forgetting darkness when the day is come.

With other tidings hast thou burdened me,

Whom desolations harbor at the last.

SAILS

In the growing haste of the world must this thing be:
The passing of sails forever from the sea?
Fewer always the sails go out to the West;
More and huger the steamers howl to the star—
 Trailing their smoke afar,
Staining the deep and the heavens' patient breast.
 Mighty are these we have tamed—
Giants electric, monsters of gas and of steam,
 Titans unknown tho named.
But oh! for a younger sea and the sails' glad gleam,
 And the clean horizon's call
And the Powers of the air man never shall tame at all!
 Was it not well with the world
 And well with the heart,
When ships went forth to lands untraced on a chart? —
 When the dauntless wings were furled
In wonderful havens, virgin then of a mast,
 At islands without a past,
Girt around with an alien ocean's foam,
 Over the world from home?

* * *

O mariners! Sea-lords on a stranger blue!
Kings of the planet's sapphire morning! You
 That had Mystery for loot!
Serfs of a sharp unrest that asked no curing
But that of golden and dragon-guarded fruit,
 Where, past the sky-line luring,

SAILS

The dim Hesperides
Echoed like purple shells the sired seas!
A vestige of your kingdom lies in light
Where a lone sail goes out against the night.
O path on which the fleets of the world were led!
Changing, changeless road of marvel and death,—
Of songless birds o'er meadows that none shall tread!
Of empire gone in a breath
As the keels of the quick descend to the keels of the dead
In havens lightless and blind!
In the hurry of things shall the sails depart from thee —
They, kin to the clouds of the sea,
And driven even as clouds by the harborless wind?
For I dream of the wonderful wings
Of the old Phenician quest
Deeper and deeper into the mystical West;
Of forgotten ocean-kings,
When the galley wandered forth,
And the sail shone white on the cold horizon-line,
Like an iceberg's peak that lifted far in the North.
For I dream of the purple brine
And the blazoned pomp of the saint on the galleon's van,
As, dark from the deep, the sails of Raleigh or Drake
On the gold of morning ran.
For I dream of battles entered for England's sake,
And Nelson's high war-frigates with canvas taut
Above the thunder of cannon, the world at stake,
And the world with death well-bought.

* * *

SAILS

Splendid now on my dream
The snows of the clipper gleam,
Towers of marble, glorious, tall in the sun—
Hurling south to the hurricanes of the Horn.
O pinions, wrenched and torn
By the north Atlantic's breath,
On homing whalers, three years' cruising done.
(Captain! captain! what of the seas of Death?)
O colored sails of the little fishing-boats,
From a thousand turquoise harbors venturing,
Under the tropic day!
Grey canvasses that bring
The shapely sealers to San Francisco Bay,
Where the steel-walled cruiser floats.
But I hear a naiad sing,
And softer now in my vision the vans of silk
Glimmer on eastern shallops, by dusk adrift
On waters of legend; and webs as white as milk
Are wafting a murdered queen to her island tomb,
Where the cypress columns lift.
And ghostly now on the gloom
The shrouded spars of the Flying Dutchman go
To harbors that none shall know;
Foamless the ripples of her passing die
Across the dark, and then from the dark, a cry!

* * *

SAILS

O light of the sea-solitude! O sails!

Must you pass even so
To the realms of fantasy and the olden tales?
Ports of oblivion, hidden far from the sun,
At your anchorage shall every one be furled,
These wings of man's adventure around the world—
Like the old beauties dying, one by one?
Ever the clouds return: shall these come back

On the wind's unchartered track—
Braving again the deep's immortal wrath?
O wings of man's adventure in old years!

Here at an ocean's brink
Whence the great, increasing quest
On the everlasting path
Draws yet the heart and the hand to the sea's frontiers
And spaces scornful of rest,
Under the night's first star I watch you sink,
In the world's twilight fading, fading West.

MIRAGE

I well remember that the year was old—
A time of fallen leaves and wings departing.
Beside our western sea the grass was starting,
And willow buds were eager to unfold.

But all that day the shadowed paths were wet,
As tho in cloud had come the waiting vision,
And on the sunset altars of transition
Awhile that mournfulness and beauty met.

Long gone the night that held my deathless dream—
Its vanished rain long given to the roses,
But tho I sleep, no other night discloses
The Three who shone by that delaying Stream.

One was called Evening for her slow caress,
And one called Peace because her eyes were tender,
(Softly she came, most innocent and slender),
And one called Heart-ache for her loveliness.

They were of slumber and mirage's sky—
Frailties of vision, an august illusion,
Living a little by the soul's inclusion,
Living in memory as long as I.

Yet did they make the burning stars seem clods—
Those shadows of illusion, passing slowly;
For on each face a Light fell sad and holy
From tracts I dreamt forbidden save to gods.

MIRAGE

A little while, a little while they gleamed,
Who were not, are not, yet shall haunt me ever,
Mingling the sorrow of the Once and Never,
To glorify the dream of him that dreamed.

I shall not know them other than they are,
Who find on paths that memory retraces
The immortal, mournful beauty of those faces
That haunting, hold me exile of their star.

THE SKULL OF SHAKESPEARE

I

Without how small, within how strangely vast!
What stars of terror had their path in thee!
What music of the heavens and the sea
Lived in a sigh or thundered on the blast!
Here swept the gleam and pageant of the Past,
As Beauty trembled to her fate's decree;
Here swords were forged for armies yet to be,
And tears were found too dreadful not to last.

Here stood the seats of judgment and its light,
To whose assizes all our dreams were led—
Our best and worst, our Paradise and Hell;
And in this room delivered now to night,
The mortal put its question to the dead,
And worlds were weighed, and God's deep shadow fell.

THE SKULL OF SHAKESPEARE

II

Here an immortal river had its rise,
 Tho dusty now the fountain whence it ran
 So swift and beautiful with good to man.
Here the foundation of an empire lies—
The ruins of a realm seen not with eyes,
 That now the vision of a gnat could scan.
 Here wars were fought within a little span,
Whose echoes yet resound on human skies.

Life, on her rainbow road from dust to dust,
 Spilt here her wildest iris, still thine own,
 Master, and with thy soul and ashes one!
Thy wings are distant from our years of lust,
 Yet he who liveth not by bread alone
 Shall see thee as that angel in the sun.

A SONG OF FRIENDSHIP
FROM "LILITH"

From earth's horizon, dim and wide,
The stained moon swings free.
Castor and Pollux, side by side,
Go downward to the sea.

Thy good sword to my need, O friend!
And my strong shield to thine.
How bright, before the darkness end,
The star-companions shine!

Two hearts may greatly dare the West,
Where one might know dismay,—
Two barks join surely in the Quest,
Where one might miss the way.

Face thou with me the immortal sun,
And counsel me by night!
In wassail and the deed well done
We two shall fare aright.

Ever wast thou the clean, blue blade,
The comrade of the skies,
The heart's, the hand's abiding aid,
With truth in heart and eyes.

TWO MET

You came, and Mystery murmured in the wood;
You spoke: a dryad ventured from her tree;
Or was it that my fancy could but see
The sweet incredible and found my mood
Demanding the impossible for food?

I know that both were softly granted me,
When, like a goddess on her devotee,
You smiled, and joy was made the only good.

For us had Silence made the dusk a shrine;
For us had needles fallen from the pine;
For us had come that wind from out the South,
Wafting your loosened hair across my face,
As I, oblivious of time and space,
Turned to your fragrant and consenting mouth.

THE COMMON CULT

Up to the House of Mammon, from dawn to sister dawn,
Called by remembered voices the sons of men are drawn;
By noon the dust goes skyward, by night the torches flare,
On veining roads that mingle—and you and I are there.

Around the House of Mammon, like ruined cities' stones,
The stubborn and the haughty have left their trampled bones.
They were the few in number that would not enter in,
Saying, "The god is evil." Saying, "To kneel is sin."

The ebony House of Mammon goes up against the sky;
The north wind and the south wind before its portals die.
Its towers go near to Heaven, its vaults go nearer Hell,
And all are fat with favor to some who serve them well.

Before the House of Mammon stand you not over-long,
But enter to the worship, unnoted in the throng;
There it is ill to parley, to ask the why or when,
For he whose line would prosper shall be as other men.

Within the House of Mammon august the twilights are,
Across whose gulf the portal gleams smaller than a star.
The bucklers of the mighty in rust and ruin melt
Above those deep foundations where king and pontiff knelt.

Within the House of Mammon low thunder of loud pray'rs
Rolls from the burdened pavement and coiled, colossal
stairs—

Petition and obeisance, when each makes known his need,
Begging the flamens hearken, begging the largess speed.

THE COMMON CULT

Within the House of Mammon his priesthood stands alert,
By mysteries attended, by dusk and splendors girt,
Knowing, for faiths departed, his own shall still endure,
And they be found his chosen, untroubled, solemn, sure.

Within the House of Mammon the golden altar lifts
Where dragon-lamps are shrouded as costly incense drifts—
A dust of old ideals, now fragrant from the coals,
To tell of hopes long ended, to tell the death of souls.

Within the House of Mammon there is no need of song,
And faced by them who doubt not, no doubt endures for
 long;
Tho twilight hold the temple, there yet each one shall see
The Word of Words, the letters that spell "Necessity."

Beyond the House of Mammon there is no need to go,
And other fanes are shadow whose figments melt and flow.
Grown weary of the service, no scoffer long derides,
For past the veils and darkness a very god abides

Above the House of Mammon the hours and ages tread,
Nor find the ramparts shaken nor see the sentries fled,
Till o'er the massy columns, broken like those of Tyre,
The long-awaited Morning go winged with crystal fire.

THE LOST NYMPH

Now whither hast thou flown?

In what retreat art hid? —

Where falling waters moan

In shadow, or amid

The rushes of the river, pebble-sown?

'Twas but a breath ago

I held thy captive hands.

Clearly thy footprints show

Along the final sands.

Almost I hear thy voice, divinely low.

I do but know thy feet

Have gone from me—not why.

I do but know them fleet

As clouds upon the sky.

Ah! gone so soon, whom love hath found so sweet!

Thy loveliness made sure

Thou wouldst be fled ere long.

No beauty shall endure

Beyond its shrining song—

However close, however strange and pure.

Afar thy pathway leads,

Yet will I follow fast,

Hoping, tho day recedes,

To find thy home at last

And silver of thee 'mid the golden reeds.

THE WINE OF ILLUSION

I saw One clad in opalescent grey,
Who held a crystal cup within her hands
In which a sun was deathless. Mighty wands
Shook as the spears of starlight in each ray,
And where they smote, the darkness was as day,
And where they smote not, night was on the lands.
Below her feet dead stars were strewn like sands,
And in her wings the constellations lay.

"Of this have all men drunken deep," she said.
"Drink this or perish. There is naught beside.
This is the draught that fashions men from swine,
And tho thy heart deny me in its pride,
Yet of my cup of dreams its blood is red
And thy lips red with my creative wine!"

TROUBADOUR'S SONG

FROM "LILITH"

Ah! listen, dear!
The burning hands of Spring
Are on the world's green girdle. Love is here,
Long waited. So I sing.

To sing thee soon
A madder song than this! —
Writ in the waning of an olden moon
To win the first-born kiss.

Ah! yearning face,
Too mystically fair!
Sweet, I would find thee in a hidden place,
And trembling, loose thy hair!

Darling, the year
Sows flowers in thy heart!
Love, who am I to tell thee in a tear
How beautiful thou art?

HARP-SONG
FROM "LILITH"

What is it in thy face
That holds the hidden grace
Of vanished years?
Sorrows in long-forgotten midnights tombed,
Beauty disastrous, tender, and foredoomed,
For which the seas and suns are, and our tears.

O turn thou swift to me,
In whose great eyes I see
All I have lost!
Beyond thy silence waits thy tenderness,
Beyond all pain thy lingering caress,
The only rapture worthy of the cost.

Say nothing, for I know!
On the far path I go
Thy love shall save.
Hath not today made beautiful the Past?
And when today is yesterday at last,
Shall not we two remember all it gave?

Ah, love! this hour, too fleet,
Spreads purple for thy feet.
The shadows close
Above the sunset ashes, ruby-embered;
And that old beauty lost in years remembered
Returns in stillness, as a moon that grows.

RAOUL'S SONG
FROM "LILITH"

The birds have told their bliss,
And all too soon that ebbing music ends
On purple reach of streams where Twilight bends
The brow to Evening's kiss.

Turn thou as mute to mine!
For on the white beginnings of thy breast
My brow and lips, idolatrous, would rest
And know the hour divine.

Now end the barren years.
The lucid evening star, a drop of dew
Hidden till sunset's rose had burned anew,
Shines also in thy tears.

Let not thy love delay,
Nor silence hold our destinies apart;
For what thy beauty says unto my heart
My heart can never say.

ATTHAN DANCES
FROM "TRUTH"

The silver of the lyre
Cries, and thy silver feet
Like living flowers repeat
Thy body's silver fire.

What scents without a name
Within thy tresses hide?
What perfect roses died
To give thy mouth its flame?

Thy hands, uplifting, float
More delicate than Love's.
Thy breasts are two white doves
Whose moan is in thy throat.

As lyre and cithern swoon,
Thou lingerest, in thy pace
The panther's gift of grace,
Who glides below the moon.

O linger where I sigh
Above the golden wine,
And touch thy mouth to mine—
A scarlet butterfly.

TO LIFE

Witch and enchantress, I have watched you feed
Your children from your cup of poison-brew;
Subtly you mix the venom and the dew,
That drunken, all may follow where you lead,
Thinking a far mirage their nearer need,
Whose phantom gardens brighten on the view,
Where compensating waters may renew
The hearts that thirst, the failing feet that bleed.

Such is the power of your deluding wine
I dream I know its magic and design,
Saying, "So far, no farther, will I sip,
Ere the draft grow too bitter." Shall there be
But deepening illusion for the lip,
And in the dregs a mightier sorcery?

THE ROMAN WALL
(A VICTORIAN SPEAKS)

Right high our fathers reared its strength
Against an unpermitted foe,
With towers that cried along its length:
"Thus far, no farther, shall ye go!"

Ours was a fat and gentle land
Of tended road and ordered shires,
Well 'stablished by the heavy hand
And hard-won wisdom of our sires.

Unharried in that pleasantness
We dreamt to dwell (O dream too bright!),
And prosper in our fields' excess,
And do the thing we thought was right.

Immune, aloof, oh! fledged with peace,
We saw the placid years unfold,
Gathered the garden's mild increase,
And knelt at altars kind and old.

Far north, in haze of rain or fog,
Survived a weird and shaggy folk;
From heathered hill to quavering bog
They ran unhindered by our yoke.

From sea to sea, far-sentineled,
Mossy, immense, the Wall endured.
We knew each fortalice firm-held
And our inheritance assured.

THE ROMAN WALL

"We knew!" We did but dream we knew,
Deluded in our ethnic scorn:
While autumn glowed and skies were blue,
The terminating plot was born.

It was no trumpet brayed them in;
Their captains did not lead the van.
A laugh—and where the Wall had been
Stood the abrupt barbarian!

Our augurs cried not of the day—
The sceptic horde came unforetold.
We shudder at the tunes they play,
Yet have they come to share our gold.

They camp in every sacred spot;
Their middens taint the morning breeze—
Vandal and Viking, Pict and Scot,
And hairy folk from over-seas.

Elder, we do not like their songs—
A fact that moves them not at all,
Too many to be bound with thongs
And haled beyond the prostrate Wall.

They will not drink our costly wines,
Contented with their swinish brews.
Their hands are hostile to our shrines
And pacts long-held with god and muse.

THE ROMAN WALL

Brazen, unawed, a facile spawn,
They house the magpie and the cur,
In wattled huts that soil the lawn
Where once the flawless marbles were.

It may be they have come to stay,
Indifferent to a chary host;
Our sons may welcome them some day,
And of that rabble make the most.

But our indignant eyes we cast,
And our offended ears we turn,
On vistas purple with the Past
And twilights where the gods return.

"HIS OWN COUNTRY"

Annu, son of the land of Keef,
Grew in knowledge and years and grief.
On him, in token of grief to be,
There fell the mantle of prophecy.

In the city of Atthar Annu dwelt,
And long at the feet of wisdom knelt,
Till the Sign was shown and the Hour was come
When his lips might be no longer dumb.

Annu, heedless of priests or kings,
Prophesied undesirable things,
Giving forth to the winds of night
Words of augury and affright.

The priesthood smiled at his futile call;
The king on his throne heard not at all;
But the people of Atthar drove him forth
To the lonely deserts of the north.—

Drove him forth from his native bound
With missile cast to the rabble's sound,
Bouncing fair from his hapless pate
Shards of various size and weight;

Crying: "Black be the curses flung
To the shameful heart and the foolish tongue!
All he has told us is lie on lie,
By the beard of the prophet Abujai!"

"HIS OWN COUNTRY"

And the years flowed onward as of yore,
And the people of Atthar thought no more
Of Annu, maddest of devotees,
And his undesirable prophecies;

Till a caravan came to the northern gate
With sound of trumpets and lordly state,
Crying loud to the Atthar folk:
"Was it here that the prophet Annu spoke?

"Show us the temple where he knelt
And the habitation where he dwelt!
Show us the palm where he used to stand,
For he is great in our northern land!"

The people of Atthar swiftly flew
And built a temple with much ado
On the place where Annu was begot
(Though none alive was sure of the spot.)

And there as a prophet they worshipped him
Where the knees were bent and the lamps were dim
For the clouds of costly incense burned
At the shrine of him whom their fathers spurned.

And the years flowed onward as of old,
Till a voice was heard on the midnight cold,
And the people of Atthar, with hearts aflame,
Stoned a new prophet in Annu's name.

LOST COLORS

Grieve not because, ephemeral, they fade,
 Unlike turquoise of cloudless lake or sky,
 And pearls that shall be splendid tho we die:
Soon from the jewels of the frost are made
The summer's amber and the vernal jade
 Or hues abandoned at the year's first sigh;
 And spinners wait unseen by any eye,
Weaving from dust the lily of the glade.

Beyond our loss is mighty recompense
Of new-born loveliness for soul and sense:
 From night the gossamers of morning glow,
 Thrown earthward from the everlasting looms;
 Still on the northern verge of sunset blooms
A rose that was disastrous long ago.

THE PASSING OF BIERCE

(These lines were written in reply to rumor that Ambrose Bierce, the poet, critic and satirist, died by his own hand.)

Dream you he was afraid to live?
Dream you he was afraid to die,
Or that, a suppliant of the sky,
He begged the gods to keep or give?
Not thus the Shadow-maker stood,
Whose scrutiny dissolved so well
Our thin mirage of Heaven and Hell—
The doubtful evil, dubious good.

If, drinking at the close of day,
The staling wine at last displease,
And, coming to the bitter lees,
One take the sickened lips away,
Who shall demand the Pilgrim keep
A twilight session with Disgust,
And know, since revellers cry he must,
A farewell nausea ere he sleep?

Were his a reason to embrace
The Roman's dignity of death,
Whose will decreed his final breath,
Determining the time and place,
Be sure his purpose was of pride,
A matter not of fear but taste,
When, finding mire upon the waste,
And hating filth, he turned aside.

THE PASSING OF BIERCE

If now his name be with the dead,
And, where the gaunt agaves flow'r,
The vulture and the wolf devour
The lion-heart, the lion-head,
Be sure that head and heart were laid
In wisdom down, content to die.
Be sure he faced the Starless Sky
Unduped, unmurmuring, unafraid.

EVEREST

Who views thee from the plain
Shall dream of coolness, not the icy storm
That on the bosom of thy mighty form
Is but a stain.

Who sees thine altar-snows
Shall muse on vastness and serenity,
Not know what winds are evermore on thee,
Above repose.

Who views thee from afar
Shall ponder on Time's magnitude, nor guess
Thine evanescence and thy nothingness
Below the star.

Untrod, unshared, apart,
O snows where none shall dare, nor wish, to dwell!
O summit lone and inaccessible
Within each heart!

AFTERNOON

The hot, huge slumber of the silent day
Has left the listening world no word but peace.
The broken shadows cease,
Impassively, their weaving and their play,
Submitting to this dream's divine release.

The vacant heavens are like a waveless sea.
Far up, a hawk drifts lonely, but no cry
Falls from the void of sky
That veils by day the passing stars on high,
Nor from that other Void a cry to me.

The dome of the enormous afternoon,
The yellow mountain-side, the hush between,
Tell not of the unseen,
And voiceless now the mind and senses swoon,
Uncaring what the Veil or Void may mean.

Lilies asleep are quiet as your hands,
That move not, though the breathing bosom stir.
The pain of years that were
Slumbers awhile, lulled by the subtle myrrh
Whose fragrance broods on all the summer lands.

Evening will come more soundless than her star,
And some cool wind wake hungers in the breast.
Now not to think is best,
And love is tenderest because afar,
And deeper than its rapture is its rest.

A COMPACT?

Far up the mountain-side today
The slopes are baked and hot;
I find no shade upon my way,
And water-springs are not.

Here, where a little gully's wall
Takes shadow from the south,
I see a tiny rillet crawl
From out a stony mouth.

Now, where the stream begins to fail
Below a narrow brink,
I carve a basin in the shale
That small wild things may drink.

A poor and shallow cup, at best,
But good for beaks and lips.
Slowly from out the mountain's breast
The clearing water drips;

And well I know when sunset light
Makes sharp the canyon rims,
My pool will wait the things of night,
Where pure and cool it brims. . . .

Spirit of nature, you that first
Called rain-clouds from the sea,
When next my needy mouth shall thirst
Do you as much for me!

AUTUMN IN CARMEL

Now with a sigh November comes to the brooding land.
Yellowing now toward winter the willows of Carmel stand.
Under the pine her needles lie redder with the rain.
Gipsy birds from the northland visit our woods again.

Hunters wait on the hillside, watching the plowman pass
And the red hawk's shadow gliding over the new-born grass.
Purple and white the sea-gulls swarm at the river-mouth.
Pearl of mutable heavens towers upon the south.

Westward pine and cypress stand in a sadder light.
Flocks of the veering curlew flash for an instant white.
Wreaths of the mallard, shifting, melt on the vacant blue.
Over the hard horizon dreams are calling anew.

Dumb with the sense of wonder hidden from hand and eye,—
Wistful yet for the Secret ocean and earth deny,—
Baffled for Beauty's haunting, hearts are peaceless today,
Seeing the dusk of sapphire deepen within the bay.

Far on the kelp the heron stands for awhile at rest.
The lichen-colored breaker hollows a leaning breast.
Desolate, hard and tawny, the sands lie clean and wide,
Dry with the wafted sea-wind, wet with the fallen tide.

Early the autumn sunset tinges to mauve the foam;
Shyly the rabbit, feeding, crosses the road to home.
Daylight, lingering golden, touches the tallest tree,
Ere the rain, like silver harp-strings, comes slanting in
from sea.

POE'S GRAVESTONE

" . . . old friends and the school children of Richmond . . . asked those great men of Boston, who had been Poe's contemporaries, . . . to join in commemorating his memory. These invitations were either ignored or they were not accepted . . . Lowell . . . Bryant . . . Whittier . . . Longfellow . . ."

The very tomb shall cover not the shame
Of those that would have bound thy wings of light!
Toiling for Beauty in the quiet night,
Little to thee were primacy or name;
But now thy star is found a holy flame
In heavens unpermitted to their flight—
Unseen by those who have not in their sight
The slowly guttering candles of their fame.

Puritanism's grey and icy ooze
Was rheum in those inexorable eyes,
That would not see wherein thy greatness stood.
The meager honor that they dared refuse
Was earth's, O thou that followed to the skies
Beauty, whose final goal is human good.

THE SECRET GARDEN

Hidden from all it lies
But the revealing skies,
Whose highest star is lamp and warden here.
The leopards of the palace prowl not near,
And foiled are cruel eyes.

Marble has walled around
The myrtle-given ground,
And cypress-tow'rs dismay the song of birds,
Where two find now the needlessness of words,
And two alone are found.

In dream or reverie,
Beyond the wood they see
The wind's wan hand, admitted or withdrawn,
Stirring the golden arras of the dawn
Or dusk's red tapestry.

Where the wind sorroweth
It strews with drifting breath
The snow of petals or their cool turquoise.
Beauty that leaves the heart but tears for voice
Has refuge here—and death.

Whether the brown bees hum,
Or leaf and lip are dumb,
The passion told is told beyond recall,
The silence made an answer unto all,
Where two alone may come.

THE SECRET GARDEN

Love hears in this domain
The moan born not of pain.
The roses of the bower and the face,
The scarlet of the flow'r and the embrace,
Are brief, but not in vain.

But whatso word love say,
No word of love can stay
The long delight whose music is a sigh.
The rapture and the beauty soon to die
No clinging hands delay.

For whether midnight moon
Or light of afternoon
Weave silently the shadows of the flowers,
Too soon is come an ending of the hours,
And parting come too soon.

NORMAN BOYER

The years go by, and I am yet to be
Where lies your dust, friend of a month and day.
The hours we spent together by the sea
Seem very far away!

Moonstones, and shells of silver and of gold,
Awhile I gathered, hardly knowing why,
And wondered that your gaze was fixed and cold,
There, as you watched the sky.

But that Horizon which you pondered on
I knew not, I that am one day to know.
Outward so soon your shadowy bark was gone
Where all the ships must go!

For even then, as quietly you scanned
The sea-line, hard between the azures met,
The word had come, the going-forth was planned,
The last decision set.

Vainly, I think, you strove to take the blame
From other hearts,—to balance peace and strife;
Vainly, till sure as death is sure, there came
The swift distaste for life.

The fool alone may censure you, I think.
The wise have other vision, having stood,
Themselves, in question at oblivion's brink,
Incredulous of good.

NORMAN BOYER

The Host that had you in from out the night
Served viands that were little to your taste:
You turned in silence from the noise and light
To gain the soothing waste.

I wonder not. I more than half admire
The critical disdain that set you free,
And find it odd that men so slowly tire
Of Time's banality.

'T is strange that I should like that Spider's mesh,
Nor mix with Life to sicken at a touch.
The sores and pimples on the lovely flesh
Disturb me not too much.

Would you decide me callous, you that had
No stomach for the base, delicious feast,
And think me, in my power to be glad,
Too near the miring beast?

Could you but say which one of us was blind!
Which way led sanity? And did you use
Courage and wisdom that we do not find?
And shall the dead accuse?

The simple heart sees life in white and black,
And may be right at that. To me 't is grey.
Hear music in the screaming from the rack?
Some hear that way.

NORMAN BOYER

What doors go wide at bullet, drug or knife?

See you the Scheme? Or do you see at all?

Deride myself for not deriding life?

Must life appall?

Time is, and still cries Pilate, "What is truth?"

Amid the million answers make your cast!

The tolerance that cannot be in youth,

The wise attain at last.

"The wise?" Again the argument's begun,

And forms loom vaguely through the darkling glass!

O questions to be answered but by one,

And that one's self, alas!

The tumult or the quietude? None knows

Which he had found the dearest and the best;

And whatsoever way the current flows,

"I like" is still the test.

OF ONE ASLEEP

Clear you call above the grasses,
Where the lonely river passes
 Gently, but she cannot hear—
Thrush of twilight, lark of morning,
Quail of noon whose crystal warning
 Tells of one who wanders near.

Ever out across the valley
Veering hawk or swallow sally,
 And the snowy gull goes free.
Pine and poppy, sage and willow,
Silver foam and azure billow,
 Wait us, but she cannot see.

Wind of autumn, hush of dreaming,
Star of evening westward gleaming,
 Still you haunt me from the Past.
Voice of ocean, sadly calling,
Still you haunt the days befalling
 And the days that could not last.

TO A GIRL DANCING

Has the wind called you sister?
Sister to Kypri, who, as the far foam kissed her,
Rose exquisite and white.
For seeing you, we dream of all swift things
And of the swallow's flight,—
Of sea-birds drifting on untroubled wings,
And incense swaying at the shrine of kings,
In gossamers of violascent light.
In what Sicilian meadows, cool with dew,
Ran rosier girls than you,
With tresses dancing free,
To tell how beautiful the world might be?
In what high days unborn,
Will sheerer loveliness go forth at morn,
To wave a brief farewell to night's last star?
For you, we envy not the lost and far,
As now you make our day
As happy and imperial as they.

More than the ripple of grass and waters flowing,—
More than the panther's grace
Or poppy touched by winds from sunset blowing,
Your limbs in rapture trace
An evanescent pattern on the sight—
Beauty that lives an instant, to become
A sister beauty and a new delight.
So full you feed the heart that hearts are dumb.

TO A GIRL DANCING

Those little hands set back the hands of time,
Till we remember what the world has dreamed,
 In her own clime,
Of Beauty, and her tides that ebb and flow
Around old islands where her face has gleamed,
The marvellous mirage of long ago.

 Ah! more than voice hath said
 They speak of revels fled—
The alabastine and exultant thighs,
 The vine-encircled head,
The rose-face lifted, lyric, to the skies,
The loins by leaping roses garlanded.
 The sandaled years return,
 The lamps of Eros burn,
 The flowers of Circe nod,
And one may dream of other days and lands,
Of other girls that touch unresting hands—
 Sad sirens of the god,
 To some forgotten tune
Swaying their silvern hips below the moon.
 Dance on, for dreams they are indeed,
 A vision set afar,
But you with warm, immediate beauty plead,
And fragrant is your footfall on our star.

O flesh made music in its ecstasy,
Sing to us ere an end of song shall be!

TO A GIRL DANCING

O fair things young and fleet!
White flower of floating feet!
Be glad! Be glad! for happiness is holy!
Be glad awhile, for on the greensward slowly
Summer and autumn pass,
With shadows on the grass,
Till in the meadow lowly
November's tawny reeds shall sigh "Alas!"
Dear eyes,
What see you on the azure of the skies?
Enchanted, eager face,
Seek you young Love in his eternal place?
Round arms upflung, what is it you would clasp—
What far-off lover?
Hands that a moment hover,
What hands unseen evade awhile your grasp?
Ah! that is best: to seek but not to find him,
For found and loved the seasons yet will blind him
To this true heaven you are—
That moth unworthy of your soul's white star.
Dance on, and dream of better things than he!
Dance on, translating us the mortal's guess
At Beauty and her immortality—
Yourself your flesh-clad art and loveliness.

Dance, for the time comes when the dance is done
And feet no longer run
On paths of rapture leading from the day.

TO A GIRL DANCING

Release not now
The vine that you have bound about your brow:
Dance, granting us awhile that we forget
How morrows but delay,
Yetⁿ come as surely as their own regret.
Through you the Past is ours,
Through you the Future flow'rs,
In you their dreams and happiness are met.
Through you we find again
That birth of bliss and pain,
That thing of joy and tears and hope and laughter
That men call youth—
A greater thing than truth,
A fairer thing than fame
In songs hereafter,
A miracle, an unreturning flame,
The season for itself alone worth living,
And needing not our patience nor forgiving.

O heart that knows enough, and yet must learn
The wisdom that we spurn!
The years at last will teach you:
May now no whisper reach you
Of noons when pleading of the flutes shall cease
And not for rapture will you beg, but peace.
To-day it seems too harsh that you should know
How soon the wreaths must go
And those flower-mating feet

TO A GIRL DANCING

Be gathered, even as flowers, by cruel Time,
 Their flashing rhyme
No more to mingle with the blood's wild beat.
Dance, with no wind to chill your perfect grace,
 Nor shadow on your face,
Nor voice to call to unenduring rest
The limbs delighting and the naked breast.

THE FAR FEET

Afton Annesley, gone forever,
Cold to-night are the stars above,
That see all beauty, but never, never,
One thing sweet as our woodland love.

Over our heads the pines were sighing;
Under us two their needles lay.
Then was an end to all denying:
All we feared was the break of day.

Afton Annesley, ocean calling
Echoes all of an old regret.
Sea-mist rising and twilight falling
Waken things that I half forget.

Pain tho it were, let me remember
All that met in the farewell kiss.
Tears and rain of a far November,
Equal now in the silences!

Afton Annesley, starlight only
Lit your way to the trysting-tree.
Here I find on the wood-path lonely
Futile dreams of a tryst-to-be.

Still would I seek you, past regaining,
Grief and joy of a tragic year.
Lost Elysium! Autumn, waning,
Murmurs all—if the heart could hear.

HESPERIAN

Strange, when the blood runs wild to-day in me,
That I but dream of the faces now so far
On the heart's horizon, near, so near, to the sea,
And setting dimly, star by fugitive star!

Now, if ever, are days when the mounting bliss
Should flood the limbs and wet with rapture the eyes:
Strange, that I dream of only a tragic kiss,
And a moon gone down forever on the skies.

April bends to her poppies dropped in flight.
O mother-month of Nature giving the breast,
With the land a pure and emerald breadth of light,
And ocean voices echoing out of the West!

The romping wind had a sort of boyishness,
Fled to tease the stranding cloud on the hill.
Never a ripple moves the water cress
In the stream, and the million-chorded pine is still.

Winter stars are gone with the winter rains,
And almond petals long since gone from the bough.
Birds begin to nest in the willow lanes.
It is faun weather again in Carmel now.

A cloud far lost on the high, eventless blue
And a vine whose little clarions have scent
For sound, awaken the memory of you—
Mist and myrrh in a dream unhappy blent.

HESPERIAN

How many mutinous years ago to-day
Did I watch you first as you wandered over the sands?
How many pitiless miles of dust away
Do you wander now, and in what shadowy lands?

Well I remember how soon it was we stood,
When the morning wind had gathered the night's last tear,
And watched the clouds brim over the western wood,
And "There," you said, "are the snows of yesteryear."

Glad am I now that I was too glad to muse
On the snows that haunt the farther dreams of man,
But took the kiss that the Fates of to-day refuse,
And ran where you said an unseen dryad ran.

Dream you, silver dryad that once you were,
Of the wind and the sands and the sunset far away,
Of the silence fallen, that only a kiss could stir,
And the wild, golden wood-days, ever with yesterday?

Well I remember foamless reaches of sea,
Undulant, living, with shimmer of pale-blue silk;
Gazing now where the wingéd foam leaps free,
I remember your eyes, like agates bathed in milk.

Beauty's paths—was there one that we did not take,
Whether it wound by mosses of the sea
Or led our feet to valleys of sage and brake,
Where blue-jays tumbled, slim, in the buckeye tree?

HESPERIAN

Morning girdled half of a world in gold,
Gathered up in earth's melodious hours.
April walked with buds too many to hold,
Till weary bees seemed taking their time with the flowers.

Leaves, owl-brown, of a mottled sycamore
Stirred or slumbered on drowsy river-sand.
Over the stream we watched a falcon soar,
White o' the breast, as you were white o' the hand.

Clouds of spring crept over a far-off hill,
Lingering as a broken wind grew less,
And a shadow lay like a hush made visible
Where the redwood dreamed in an emerald loneliness.

Over the tawny meadowland at noon
Hiving blackbirds surged and sank in their flight.
Under the northern shadow of the dune,
Sands were clean as the moon of day was white.

Ocean shells with tint of an autumn leaf
Lay where desolate beaches bade us roam;
And we saw the edge of the wave well over the reef,
Willow-green, till it broke to music and foam.

Sounding sapphire and billows of choral jade,
Deep and wild your song on the lucent air,
As we watched the golden reefs of sunset fade,
Ere our galleons of dream could founder there.

HESPERIAN

Mournful, mute, for the world's new loveliness,
Sad and glad with the beauty of Time and love,
We told it all in a wondering caress—
Heedless of Time and the jealous stars above.

Mute or not, of your mouth I had its word,
Softer than ear may know or a tongue impart;
And a heart-whole even-song of a hidden bird
Rose in the hush to make reply for my heart.

Paths of peace that we shall not trace again,
Where the Mariposa lily shone and waned,
And Fremont's flower blazed trail for the cyclamen!
O lily cup, and cup of our passion drained!

O ghost of fire where the wind ran grey in the grass!
Wild lilac bloom and audible rapture of bees!
Branches bent for the feet of Love to pass!
Voice of Love so low in the veiling trees!

Rapture grown too deaf to hearken or heed!
Lips that cried in a music unsuppressed!
Beauty given beyond all bearing or need!
Pansy-bronze of your eyes, and apple-bloom of your
breast!

O far away! do you never harken in sleep
As I, to an ocean-echo mingled with dream,
From shore and reef of an indiscernable Deep—
A music set to a memory supreme?

HESPERIAN

Was it worth our pain, our desolation of loss?

Was it best that our lips be given to other lips?

Far on the blue the sails, ephemeral, cross.

Over the West the star, immutable, slips.

Here by the beauty and terror of the sea,

On a dune between the sapphire and the pines,

I have mused on all that your beauty meant to me

And a final beauty that love at last divines.

I have watched for an hour the wave's deliberate grace.

I shall sit and dream of an old regret, I know,

And the touch of things inviolate in your face,

Till the granite facets take the afterglow.

Can it be that the thorns that we found at last so sharp

Saved for us then our irretrievable rose,

Tho the storm that took an ocean for its harp

Died at last on the far, foreshadowing snows?

Somehow, dumbly, out of this dark of things,

Heart and soul find words of a wiser tongue,

Somehow, blindly, take a splendor of wings,

Made of the dreams we dreamt when we were young.

Never a worthless flower the seasons find,

Nor utter night, tho shadows fall as they must.

Fresh on the brow is an ever-living wind

From a Sea of change whose foam is blossoming dust.

HESPERIAN

Surf-walls eternally builded, eternally overthrown,
Deep in the heart we find your vision and song.
Paths apart, that we took at last alone,
Led you not to the greater hills ere long?

O wine we drank, whose very dregs were delight!
I have seen your scarlet over a setting sun.
Flower of flesh and flower of an April night!
Far in the moon your loveliness is one.

Fates that mix with beauty of sun and moon
Love that seemed awhile the heart of a star,
Would I yearn for its joy if it had not died so soon?
Would I dream of its grace if it had not fled so far?

THE FACE OF THE SKIES.

Who shall loose Orion's bands?

"I!" saith Eternity.

"I with annulling hands

Shall set the Titan free."

Who shall erect upon the sky

New forms of might?

Saith Eternity: "I!

I shall re-people night.

"As a breath on glass,—

As witch-fires that burn,

The gods and monsters pass,

Are dust, and return.

"Is the toil much to you

That is little to me?

Such dreams the gods knew,"

Saith Eternity.

THE MORNING STAR

'Mid hush of wind and constellations paling,
Thou gleamest yet, O herald of the dawn!
Thou sister stars, whom light is slowly veiling,
Tremble and pass, in quietude withdrawn.

Now Nature, stilled as tho in adoration,
Bids, voiceless, that the hallowed heart aspire
To pause before thy beauty's consummation
And make itself the altar of thy fire.

Slowly above the darkened forest creeping,
One cloud, the lonely child of Heaven and Night,
Across the sky goes desolate and weeping,
Shrouding the north, but not thy vestal light.

O incommunicable beauty burning
With silent flame the body and the soul!
The exalted gaze, in solitude upturning,
Finds in thy star a mystery and goal.

Azures of twilight robe the southern mountain,
Where wakes the bird to greet thee with his mirth,
And see thine image in the tranquil fountain—
Too bright, too calm, too pure a thing for earth.

I dream that song an echo of thy singing
Who dream thou singest in thy clear domain,
Till from thy zone the falling music, ringing,
Mingles its crystal with the falling rain.

THE MORNING STAR

Flushed as with radiance of wings immortal,
Glow now the tracts on which thy glory came,
Till through the amethystine eastern portal
The morning comes, led by thy dying flame.

Farewell! whose presence now and each to-morrow
Makes lyrical the heavens and the years,
Wedding the breath of ecstasy and sorrow,
That beauty such as thine transcend its tears.

THE EVENING STAR

Eastward in afterglow the mountains rise,
An evanescent rose on granite fading—
Far hues that seem, a crystal silence aiding,
The walls of a deserted Paradise.

The sunset dies, with scarlet pinions furled. . . .
On azure plains the sea-winds sink or falter. . . .
Evening and ocean are thy shrine and altar,
O grail of silver lifted to a world!

The wine of thy pure chalice none shall drain;
But he that sees thy vesper glory burning
Shall walk the purple of thy kingdom, spurning
All loveliness that haunts him without pain.

The mighty waters, darkening afar,
Throng the grey shores with mournful voices calling.
Echoes reply. Earth's shadow, eastward falling,
Is cold upon the pathway of the star.

The loneliness departing sunsets leave
Is deeper for the vision of thy splendor,
Whose radiance, ethereal and tender,
Burns tremorless upon the winter eve.

O flame above the Islands of the Blest!
Often, ah! often, not alone in story,
Have young Love's eyes been lifted to thy glory,
Yearning to follow thee beyond the West—

THE EVENING STAR

Yearning in vain, through all unhappy years:
He shares with Beauty her inherent sorrow.
As yesterday beheld, so must to-morrow
Behold thy light regathered by his tears.

The charts of sea and heavens limn thy flight,
Yet still we seek a Land beyond, whose faces
Forever gleam with thy mysterious traces—
Touched faintly by thy slowly setting light.

O Land that youth alone, or folly, seeks!
A Shadowland, these many years forbidden,
By sunset or the last horizon hidden,
And thou the fire above its altar-peaks.

So art thou light to that which only seems;
So art thou symbol of another Setting
To us, unfortunate and unforgetting,
Homesick for that lost country of our dreams.

TO CHARLES ROLLO PETERS
MASTER-PAINTER OF NOCTURNES

Beauty and dusk have met to make your dream,
And born of each it lifts immortal wings.
This hour Keats' nightingale forever sings,
And here the rubies of his twilight gleam.
For this the moon with iridescent beam
Of ghostly silver hallows earthly things,
And here the goddess of the shadow brings
Her mystery by your magic found supreme.

O hush of earth and heaven, pause awhile,
For more than music is your thrall to us,
And human discords find us all too soon—
We mariners that see on Circe's isle
Jewels that dusk makes richly luminous,
And opals of the midnight and the moon.

TO RUTH CHATTERTON

I

Hear I the fragile music of the fay?

What ancient magic holds me? Now at last

I seem to find the wonder of the Past,

Known before Time had touched the world to grey.

Some vanished star has found me with its ray,

That once in seas of old romance was glassed;

A shadow of enchantment softly cast

By some lost moon is on my heart to-day.

Yours is the charm that perished long ago

(Or so we thought). Now listening, I know

Forgotten spells are on the air tonight,

And dreams that haunt me in an irised band.

Your captive unconditional I stand,

Wounded deliciously by sound and sight.

TO RUTH CHATTERTON

II

No more of Helen's beauty, nor the hand
Of Circe waving would my visions be,
For western sunsets long have saddened me,
Watched as the surf was on the twilight strand,
Till now my dream is of a nameless land—
A realm of rains and grass beside the sea,
Where roams a gray-eyed princess, dryad-free,
On paths between the forest and the sand.

Again my dream has change, till sea and wind
Seem far away, and in a garden-close
Translucent flowers touch the calm with musk,
On yellow marbles delicately twined,
Where, silent as her heavy-petalled rose,
A golden queen sits in a golden dusk.

THE COOL, GREY CITY OF LOVE
(SAN FRANCISCO)

Tho I die on a distant strand,
And they give me a grave in that land,
Yet carry me back to my own city!
Carry me back to her grace and pity!
For I think I could not rest
Afar from her mighty breast.
She is fairer than others are
Whom they sing the beauty of.
Her heart is a song and a star—
My cool, grey city of love.

Tho they tear the rose from her brow,
To her is ever my vow;
Ever to her I give my duty—
First in rapture and first in beauty,
Wayward, passionate, brave,
Glad of the life God gave.
The sea-winds are her kiss,
And the sea-gull is her dove;
Cleanly and strong she is—
My cool, grey city of love.

The winds of the Future wait
At the iron walls of her Gate,
And the western ocean breaks in thunder,
And the western stars go slowly under,
And her gaze is ever West
In the dream of her young unrest.

THE COOL, GREY CITY OF LOVE

Her sea is a voice that calls,
And her star a voice above,
And her wind a voice on her walls—
My cool, grey city of love.

Tho they stay her feet at the dance,
In her is the far romance.
Under the rain of winter falling,
Vine and rose will await recalling.
Tho the dark be cold and blind,
Yet her sea-fog's touch is kind,
And her mightier caress
Is joy and the pain thereof;
And great is thy tenderness,
O cool, grey city of love!

THE PRINCESS ON THE HEADLAND

My mother the queen is dead.
My father the king is old.
He fumbles his cirque of gold
And dreams of a year long fled.
The young men stare at my face,
But cannot meet my glance—
Cavan tall as a lance,
Orra swift in the race.

Death was ever my price,
Since my maidenhood began:
At the thought of a Gaelic man
My heart is sister of ice.
'T is another for whom I wait,
Tho I have not kissed his sword:
He or none is my lord,
Tho our night be soon or late.

The star grows great in my breast:
It is crying clearly now
To the star on the burnished prow
Of his galley far in the West.
The capes of the North are dim,
And the windward beaches smoke
Where the last long roller spoke
The tidings it held of him.

THE PRINCESS OF THE HEADLAND

Sorrow I know he brings,
 Battle, despair and change,—
 Beauty cruel and strange,
And the shed bright blood of kings.
Breast, be white for his sake!
 Mouth, be red for the kiss!
 Soul, be strong for your bliss!
Heart, be ready to break!

TO THE MOON

Whether by starry waters westward led,
Where foam as white as thou is on the coast,
Or when the lilies of the dawn are red,
Ever thou seemest lonely, and a ghost.

'Mid frost of stars I saw thee pace the night,
High over quiet field and voiceless tree,
When Sirius shook like a tear of light,
On sapphire darker than the morning sea.

When ocean drank the dregs of sunset's wine
I watched thy keen-horned crescent sink and go,
On islands past the vague horizon line
Bent like a Titan's huge and golden bow,

Or like a wave that broke to stirless foam
Upon a beach of Heaven, curved and vast—
Sands where the shades of mariners might roam
And watch a spectral sail go dumbly past.

And I have seen thee crumbling and decayed,
A sepulchre of beauty long unsung—
On whose chill nacre wreaths as chill were laid
And sorrows graven in a nameless tongue.

And I have seen thee glorious and great,
Flooding the world and walking free of bars;
Arcturus was thy captain at the gate,
And thy companions were immortal stars.

TO THE MOON

Yet ever wert thou wraith and wanderer
Within that desolation of the sky,
Gazing on realms where worlds no longer were,
Whose death had shown thee how all worlds must die—

Wherefore our own. Is it for this that we
Are pensive in thy melancholy light,
Guessing, from thine, the sun's mortality,
The cold and silence of the crypts of night?

Gleamest thou symbol of oblivion,
Showing with frozen light, but light no less,
What swords are on the roadway of the sun,
What Shadows gather in the Timelessness?

Or art thou pledge that recompense may be,
And beauty, changing, still abide with death—
A crystal clearer for an icy sea,
A snowflake born of winter's arctic breath?

For still thou grantest to our dreams a way,
Whether thy silver dawn is on the east,
Or where, between the starlight and the day,
Thy feet of alabaster go released;

And ocean calls, remembering thy lure,
And gathers jewels for thy path of flame,
Heaped diamond, unfathomable, pure,
From age to age reshattered—and the same.

TO THE MOON

As waters follow thee in wide pursuit,
So dost thou lead us to a dream's beyond.
Washed by thy tides of pearl the land lies mute,
And mute our souls, touched by thy magic's wand.

So lead awhile, till we be led no more,
Nor take, as thou, our morrows from the sun. . . .
Slowly, from mountain-peak to soundless shore,
Time's purple deepens to oblivion.

THE RUNE
FROM "TRUTH"

Nain the prince, one day in youth,
Playing on the northern dune,
Found an Arctic dragon-tooth,
Whiter than the crescent moon.

Keen and cold and bright it lay,
Where a long-forgotten keel
Crumbled gauntly, day by day,
And the gull and curlew wheel.

Nain, enraptured with the thing,
Quick and eager, like a bird,
Brought it to the drunken king—
Hoping for a thankful word.

Called the king for Amelup,
Graver of the gem and gold;
Bade him make of it a cup,
Ere the budding month grew old.

Ere the given time ran out,
Amelup in ruby flame
Girt the ivory about
With a long-unuttered name.

Amelup, before the king
Learned what weird lay gleaming there,
Found by night a faery ring;
Faded in that magic air.

THE RUNE

Now the king will never have
Knowledge of the glowing rune,
Tho the witch in crypt and cave
Beg her daemon to commune.

Never may the king divine,
Tho a youth and maid he kill,—
Tho he drink a holy wine
To the elf within the hill.

Amelup may laugh right well,
If he hear that angry lord
Beg the magic men to tell
What no magic may accord.

THE HIDDEN POOL

Far in a wildwood dim and great and cool,
I found a cavern old,
Where grew, above a pure, unfathomed pool,
A flower of elfin gold.

There, tho the night came lone of any lamp,
Chill on the flower fell
A pallor faint, inimical and damp,
A halo like in Hell.

Lambent it gleamed within the twilight calm,
Long fugitive of day—
Malign, I thought, with alien dew and balm,
A moon of baneful ray.

A breath of attar, fallen from the bloom,
Made opiate the air,
Like wafture of an undulant perfume,
Flown from enchanted hair.

A vampire bat, malignant, purple, cold,
At midnight came to glean
The honey that each petal would withhold
From all but the unclean.

Goblin and witch, I dream, have mingled here
The venom of their blood,
Nightly communing when that flower of fear
Had broken not the bud.

THE HIDDEN POOL

But, lich or lemur, none remained to note
 The pollen falling chill,
A film on rock or pool, each yellow mote
 Pregnant with hate and ill.

None other bent to watch, within that crypt,
 The troubled water foam,
Nor knew, beyond, what violet ichor dripped
 From wall and hidden dome,

Nor why (tho none came there to fail and drown)
 The troubled fountain boiled,
When touched in that dark clarity, deep down,
 A pallid hydra coiled.

What ghoul may come to pluck that flower of doom
 No witch hath rendered clear:
The warden of an unrevealing gloom,
 I watch and wait and fear.

It well may be a Form of death may own
 The twilight for a pall;
Till then I haunt the caverned air alone,
 With quiet under all.

THE DEATH OF CIRCE

Plotting by night her death,
The god recharnted that Aeaean rune,
Till men beheld a vapor dim the moon
With grey, demoniac breath.

When charm and rune were whole,
He brought that golden one a golden **flagon**,
Made in the image of a writhing dragon,
With teeth that clutched the bowl.

He poured vermillion wine
In that pale cup, to god or faun forbid,
Knowing the witch knew not the venom hid
In that red anodyne.

He gave the witch, who quaffed
And, drinking, dreamt not who had poured for her,
Nor why the cup came redolent of myrrh,
Nor why her leopard laughed;

Nor felt, from floor to dome,
Her high pavilion quiver on the dark,
Ere, with an augury too dim to mark,
A quiet lapped her home.

In all her magic craft
There lay no power to warn her to beware
The bitter drop from Lethe mingled there
Within the traitor draught.

THE DEATH OF CIRCE

But ere a pang of fright
Could wake, or he be bidden to depart,
There broke a little wound above her heart,
From which the blood dripped bright.

And heaven and earth grew dim,
While round the throne there gleamed a coral flood,
From her who knew not why the forfeit blood
Fell lyrical for him.

THE PATHWAY

Through the singing pines of Carmel runs the trail to
Monterey,
Taken by the gentle padres as they passed from bay to bay.
'Round the meadow, up the hillside, goes the pathway to
the North,
Trodden by the fated savage ere the men of Spain went
forth.
Thought they then, the Mission fathers and the careless
cavaliers,
Of the dusky men that made it in the unrecorded years?
So I questioned, idly musing where the yerba buena twines:
"Far away and long forgotten!" sang the wind in Carmel
pines.

Of the trees that cast their shadow in the noontide of the sun,
Green and great above the pathway, now remains not
even one:
Younger shafts have grown to fullness from the dust of
parent trees;
Younger branches hold their harpstrings to the fingers of
the breeze.
Brown and broken lie the needles, brown and brittle falls
the leaf,
Where beside the manzanita Fremont's flower had burst
the sheaf.
In the flood and surge of Nature, ebb and end the heart
divines.
"Far away and long forgotten!" sang the wind in Carmel
pines.

THE PATHWAY

Man of God and caballero, shall a soul recall them now?
O'er their ashes on the hillside yearly goes the needy plow.
Tho we hear their names in legends of the empire they began,
Face and form have slowly vanished from the memories
of man.

Where the Spanish beauty cantered, steeds of steel go down
the lane;

On the Mission falls the shadow of the circling aeroplane.
In the glade where Summer wantoned, yellow lie the seeded
vines.

"Far away and long forgotten!" sang the wind in Carmel
pines.

To the embers of our campfire on the margin of the beach,
Where the stranded kelp is drying, soon or late the breakers
reach.

Slowly west the sun is setting, as we roam with trysting
hands

Where the spray is white a moment on our footprints in
the sands.

Shall our voices be remembered any more than winds that
fled?

Youth and love beside the river little reckon of the dead.
How they brim the wide horizon, red and gold of sunset
wines!

"Far away and long forgotten!" sings the wind in Carmel
pines.

THE PATHWAY

All the loves by Time defeated, how their sorrows haunt
the heart!—

Beauty born to beauty's passing, souls united but to part.
Wild, aeolian wind above me, hold you still their farewell
sighs?

Time and tears dull not the splendor of the great, unhappy
eyes.

Faces bent from cruel casements, lips forbidden, mute
below,

Sad the light that falls upon you from the ages' afterglow.
Like a litten tear of Heaven now the star of evening shines.
"Far away and long forgotten!" sings the wind in Carmel
pines.

Two and two beside the shoreline share the thunder and
the foam,

Till beyond the dune or meadow love and twilight call them
home.

On the hills above the valley, bare of veiling grass and tree,
Grey and level lies the shoreline of the prehistoric sea.

You that wait by beach or woodland, you that share so
brief a day,

Keep the troth that two have given, and the trysting while
you may.

On their pathway in the heavens westward pass the
solemn Signs.

"Far away and long forgotten!" sings the wind in Carmel
pines.

THE LAST ISLAND

What prow shall find it? On the charts
Our own is made the final land;
But visions of a farther Strand
We find at evening in our hearts.

Then gazing from the headland's height,
We seem to see, remote and clear,
A living radiance appear
On jacinth terraces of light.

Deep in the sunset fire it glows,
Whose dusky scarlet, shoaling north,
Lures grey or youthful dreamer forth
To seek the lone horizon's rose.

What golden people call it home?
We too would learn their mythic tongue,
And listen to the saga sung
Beyond the coral and the foam.

But many doubt and many scorn,
So transitory burned that fire,
An ember of the sunset's pyre
That died on solitudes forlorn.

Westward the purple deepens fast,
Horizon to infinity;
Mirage is on that changeful sea—
Illusions of the feigning Vast.

THE LAST ISLAND

Our oldest seaman knew a day
When, staring from his galley's beak,
He seemed to see a vesper peak,
Faint, visionary, far away—

A ghost of pearl, a shadow far,
So dim he could not trust his eyes;
Then, where it faded on the skies,
Gazing again he saw a star.

And ships have vanished in the West
Whose mariners we knew awhile:
Perchance, we say, they found that Isle,
And ended there the dream and quest.

The coastwise keels deny the tale.
Beyond, they saw but ocean gleam;
Another port, their captains deem,
Harbors the unreturning sail.

Who shall decide? For still that Land
Seems not of futile mystery;
Unresting stars and peaceless sea
May well perturb the compass-hand.

Tho where it gleamed the wave is blue
On brine a thousand fathom deep,
The vision and the hope we keep
The sunset solitudes renew—

THE LAST ISLAND

Of some far dusk when, Eden-eyed,
Its happy folk shall welcome us,
By sands no longer fabulous
And foam of that enchanted tide.

INFIDELS

Cold and eternal stare his eyes of stone,
As now, adored across the templed gloom,
The graven god exalts his granite room.
Implacably his acolytes intone:
The smitten gong makes answer in a groan;
Slowly the azures of the worship fume,
Phantoms awhile of that enduring tomb,
And "Life is evil!" now the bonzes drone.

Without, a darkness passionate with breath
Of unseen flowers—a fragrance at the shrine
Of two that lie incredulous of death.
The grass is cool beneath her, and the night
Holds, as a rose her immaterial wine,
The moan and murmur of the old delight.

VOX HUMANA

(TO HUMPHREY J. STEWART AT THE ORGAN)

Riven with harmonies, I watched your hands
Weave from the soundlessness their sounding spell.
The music, with an ocean in its swell,
Broke wave by wave upon the spirit's strands,
And left me homesick for the ghostly Lands
Where joys that died and deathless memories dwell.
Regret was there, old voices of farewell,
And Love went lonely on those shadow-sands.

Time and eternity cried there their tale,
With throats of choral thunder and the wail
Of archangelic sorrows told to Night.
Slowly they sank, until I seemed to hear,
Far-wafted from a Paradisal height,
My mother's voice, remotely sad and clear.

AN ELEGY

H. M. M.

Thank God for tears, for he is gone—
Another shadow taken hence;
And now no touch of him is on
The estranging harp-strings of the sense.

He who was but a thought that ceast
Endures no more save in our own—
Claustral, content, assoiled, releast,—
His brother-dead alone as lone.

To memory of us and him
Come not our deeds of gentleness:
Plaudit and gift lie far and dim;
Reproofs retain their old excess.

Old ardors lose their forfeit fire.
Remains, to us who stood so blind,
Of all desires a last desire:
The wish that we had been more kind.

But One hath shut a secret door
On one who never shall return,
Tho time the vernal stars restore,
And earth the blossoms for his urn.

SONNETS ON THE SEA'S VOICE

v

Since ocean rolled and ocean winds were strong,
That voice on all the narrow shores is found,
Unchanging, immemorial, profound,
A sorrowing the caverned cliffs prolong,
Where foam is choral and where thunders throng,
Or where the sands, uncharted or renowned,
Tremble forever to its elder sound,
The ground-note of the planet's undersong.

What man shall hear that utterance, alone,
That dirge of life, that music not of man,
Nor know how brief a term our seasons span
And what a mystery our hearts denote,
That hear from strands eternally unknown
The pulse of chords tremendous and remote?

SONNETS ON THE SEA'S VOICE

VI

The wind has loosed its armies on the West,
And ocean joined that huge hostility;
Armored in jade, the legions, swinging free,
Hurl rank on rank against the headland's breast.
Within the thunders of that old unrest,
The doom of gods that were and gods to be
Seems sounded by the trumpets of the sea—
The music of an everlasting quest.

That cry was, when the sapphire deeps began,
And still the hosts of wind and sea renew
Their ancient menace in the heart of man,
As, consonant, the voices of that war
Meet in one Voice on the eternal blue:
"Time was, Time is, and Time shall be no more!"

THE DEAD CAPTAIN

F. C. H.

This our strong man is dead at last,
 Lethe on brow and limb,
And all our kingdom of the past
 Goes down in dust with him:
Walls in whose shade we laughed and leapt—
 Built of his heart and brain;
Halls in whose peacefulness we slept—
 Now given to the rain.

Beneath the shelter of his shield,
 A buckler strong and wide,
Light-panoplied we took the field,
 Trusting our strength untried.
We dreamt 't was we the foemen feared,
 Ere trumpets told the death
And on the path his sword had sheared
 We passed with tranquil breath.

The shock or cunning of the foe
 Little we reckoned then
Who see today the battle go
 Against our fighting-men.
The toil, the sweat, the expressed blood—
 We found them but in talk
Of him who won across the mud
 That we on marble walk.

THE DEAD CAPTAIN

Nothing he cares, who nothing knows
How fares our war today,
Gone to the long, austere repose
That beds the weary clay.
'T is we, by his old victories freed
To respites dear as brief,
That learn of our own woe and need
His greatness and his grief.

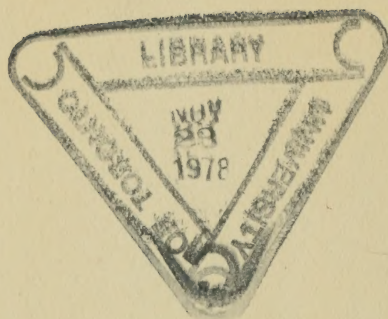
WIND IN PINES

Once forget-me-nots grew here,
Where the grass and pines are met.
Is she distant now or near?—
She I was not to forget.

Come the flowers, go the flowers:
Memories come and will not go.
In the summer that was ours,
How were she and I to know?

In the forest sang the bird;
On the grass the dews were clear.
All unsaid our lacking word,
All unwept the needful tear.

As of old the pine trees sigh,
Music of an old regret,
Can she hear my heart reply?—
She that I cannot forget.



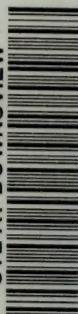
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